



**THE STATE BAR
OF CALIFORNIA**

1149 South Hill Street
Los Angeles, California 90015-2299
Telephone: (213) 765-1000

Dear Complaining Witness:

In order to help us evaluate and process your complaint, please complete the attached Informal Complaint form and provide as many of the following items as possible:

- **A copy of any retainer agreement which you might have in writing from the attorney. If there was no written agreement, please explain what your understanding was as to how and when the attorney was to be paid for fees, costs, etc.**
- **Copies of the front and back sides of all cancelled checks and/or copies of receipts you have showing payments made by you to the attorney.**
- **Copies of all correspondence between you and the attorney.**
- **A written explanation of the exact nature of your complaint. Explain what the Attorney did or did not do that forms the basis of your complaint.**
- **The last date you were in contact with the attorney and what occurred at that time.**
- **The title of the case, the case number, and the name of the court. (For example: Smith vs. Jones, Case No. 1234, Los Angeles Superior Court.)**
- **Copies of any pertinent court documents in your possession.**
- **If you have hired a new attorney, please provide his or her name, address and telephone number.**
- **Your daytime telephone number.**
- **The number of attorneys in the law firm complained about. 1 for solo practitioner, 2 - 10 for small law firm and 11 + for large law firm. If you don't know, state "don't know."**

Thank you for your cooperation.

**THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA
Office of the Chief Trial Counsel**

THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA

Instructions for Filing a Complaint Against an Attorney

Fill out all spaces on the complaint form completely. Give your name, address, zip code, and telephone number-both business and home telephone.

Be sure to give the full and complete name of the attorney about whom you are complaining. Also give his address and telephone number. If you wish to complain about more than one attorney, use a separate complaint form for each attorney. If any of the blank spaces do not apply to your case, write in this particular space N/A (Not Applicable). Be sure to date and sign the complaint form.

Please note item (9) on the form and answer if known. If you do not know, state “don’t know”.

Then on a separate sheet of paper, tell us what your complaint is against the attorney. We also need to know the background of your case: what type of case is it, when did it first start, how did you choose this attorney, when did you go to him, what was your agreement with the attorney, was this agreement verbal or in writing, etc. Then tell us in your own words what has happened so far in this case.

Some Things You Should Know

This memorandum is given to you so that you will know some things about the State Bar and what it can do and cannot do when it considers a complaint against an attorney.

1. The authority of the State Bar is limited by law. It cannot act as your lawyer. For example, it cannot give you legal advice or other legal services, so it cannot advise you what your rights are in a given situation, or what you should do. It cannot give you the name of a particular attorney to help you. If you do not have an attorney now and do not know one whom you wish to hire, there are **Lawyer Reference Services** in many areas; possibly one of these is listed in the telephone directory in your area.
2. The State Bar cannot advise or otherwise help you in any matters connected with your complaint nor in any other dispute in which you may be involved. Thus, it cannot, for example, decide whether an attorney’s particular fee is reasonable. In this regard we should inform you that some local Bar Associations do have a Fee Arbitration Committee. Perhaps the local Bar Association in your area has such a Committee.
3. The State Bar is not a court. It cannot, for example, order an attorney to do something for you or to stop doing something, although it can compel persons to attend State Bar hearings. It cannot get for you money or other property. It decides only whether disciplinary proceedings should be started against an attorney, if warranted, based upon information furnished to it.
4. The State Bar can discipline, or recommend that an attorney be disciplined, only for a violation of the State Bar Act or the Rules of Professional Conduct.

THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA
COMPLAINT FORM
Read instructions before filling in this form.

Date _____

- (1) Your name and address _____

- (2) Telephone number: Residence _____ Work _____
- (3) The name, address and telephone number of the attorney being complained about. (See note below.)

- (4) Have you or a member of your family complained about this attorney previously?
Yes ____, No _____. If yes, please state to whom the previous complaint was made, its approximate date and disposition.

- (5) Did you employ the attorney? Answer yes or no and, if "yes," give the approximate date you employed him or them and the amount, if any, paid to him.

- (6) If your answer to 5 above is "no," what is your connection with the attorney? Explain briefly.

- (7) Write out on a separate piece of paper and send-with this form a statement of what the attorney did or did not do that you are complaining about. Please state the facts as you understand them. Do not include opinions or arguments. If you employed the attorney, state what you employed him to do. Sign and date such separate piece of paper. Further information may be requested. (Attach copies of pertaining documents.)
- (8) If your complaint is about a law suit, answer the following, if known:
a. Name of court (For example, Superior Court or Municipal - in what county)

b. Title of the suit (For example, Smith against Jones).

c. Number of the suit _____
d. Approximate date the suit was filed _____
e. If you are not a party to this suit, what is your connection with it? Explain briefly.

- (9) Size of law firm complained about (*) 1 Attorney ____ 2 - 10Attorneys ____ 11 + Attorneys ____ Don't know ____

NOTE: If you are complaining about more than one attorney, write out the information about each in answer to questions 3 through 8 above on separate sheets if necessary.

Mail to:
Office of the Chief Trial Counsel/Intake
State Bar of California
1149 South Hill Street
Los Angeles, California 90015-2299

(*) **Section 6095.1 of the Business and Professions Code mandates that the State Bar compile statistics concerning the size of the attorney's law firm – solo practitioner, small law firm (2-10 attorneys) and large law firm (11+ attorneys).**

Signature _____